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TRACKS TO DIXIE

Part One

THE NON-NATIVE'S GUIDE

To St. George Speech

MRS. "D"

The Spirit of Dixie

TRACKS TO UTAH'S DIXIE



STORY & PHOTOS BY
ROBERT B. (BOB) KOHL

This is the first installment in a four-part series which chronicles the footprints placed down in St. George—from the dinosaurs 200 million years ago to the modern super-highway Interstate 15.

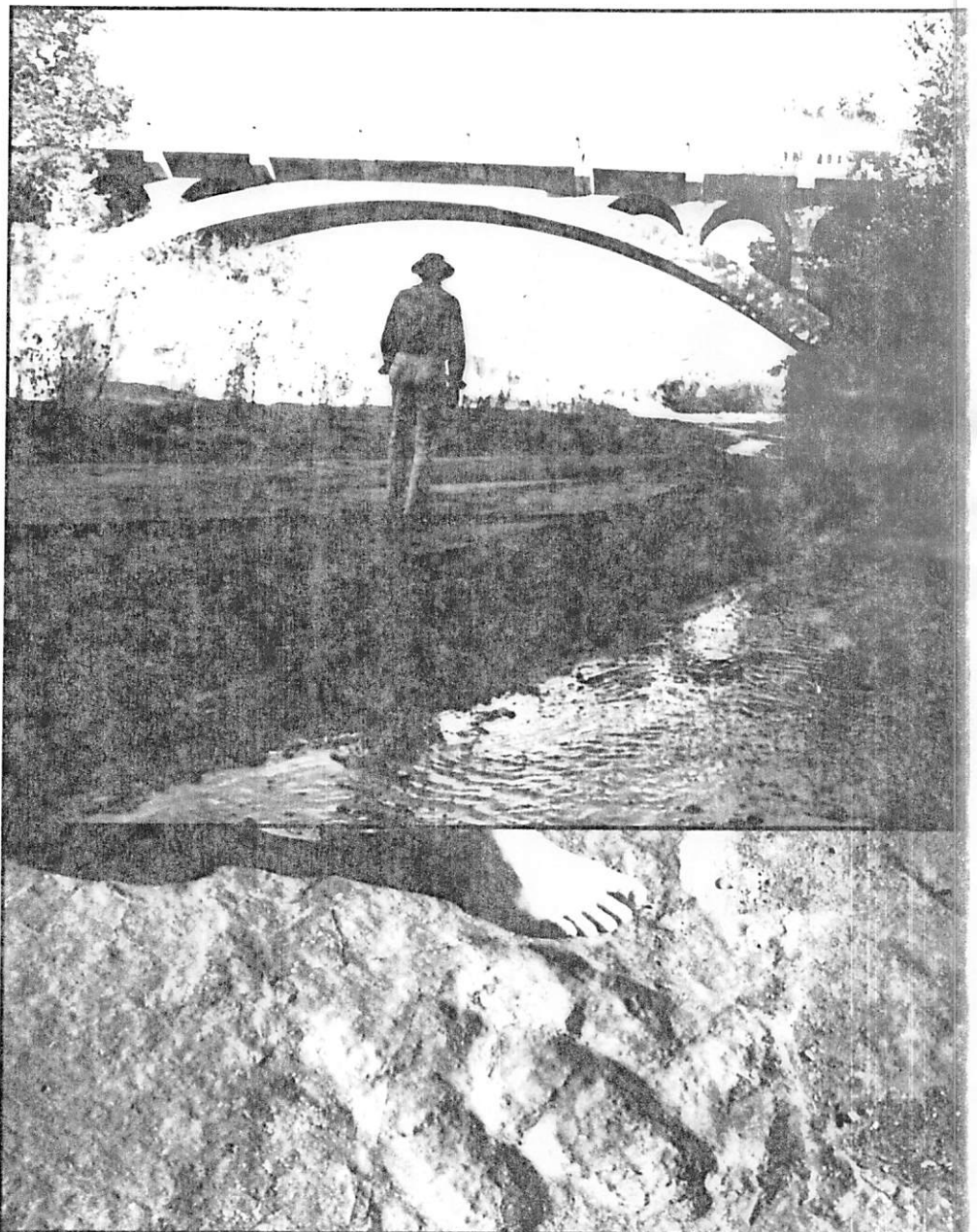
The first footprints in the St. George area were probably those of prehistoric dinosaurs and their relatives who roamed these high desert lands when they were huge inland lakes, swamps, and marshlands, remnants of vast oceans that once covered this planet Earth.

We find their 200-million-year-old tracks in the exposed limestone of Warner Valley wash, and fossilized remains of their flora and fauna from ammonites to trilobites, to fish and ferns, in the limestone deposits from Castle Rock to Leeds and throughout the Southwest.

As the later glaciers retreated at the end of the Ice Age, the next footprints were those of the prehistoric horse and camel, the mammoth, and the long-horned bison—and those of the earliest man in the New World who followed and hunted these creatures across the Bering Strait land bridge some 20,000 or more years ago.

We find the fossilized remains of these animals and the Stone Age weapons that killed them throughout "killing sites"—small cliffs where animals could be herded into crippling falls, or bogs where they could be killed when they became mired in mud, in the West and Southwest.

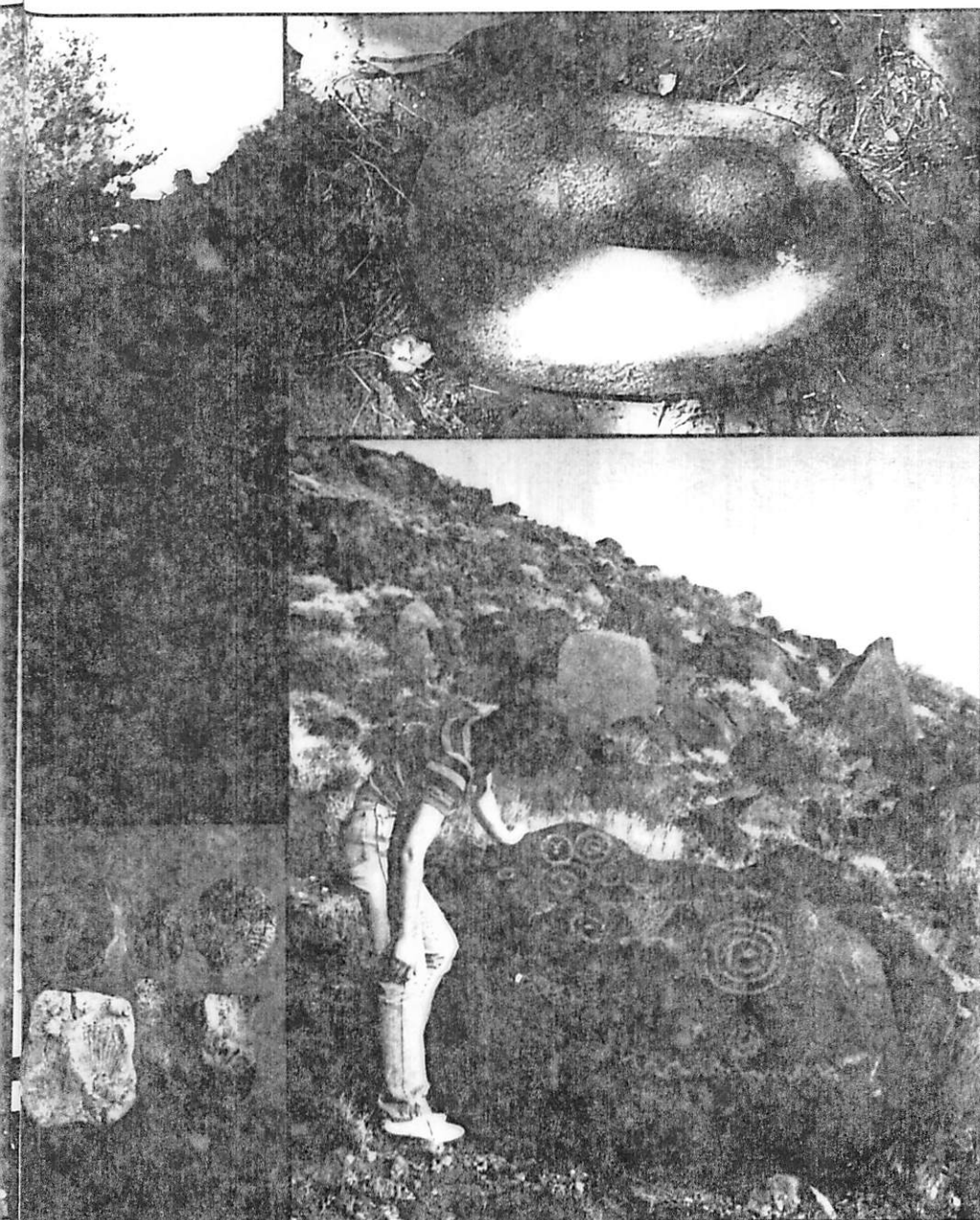
Less than 2,000 years ago, this developing native archaic American—the product of more than 20,000 years



Top left, before this bridge was built on old Highway 91, the footprints of Escalante and Dominguez (1776), Jedediah Strong Smith (1826), Parley P. Pratt (1850), and John D. Lee (1851), were imprinted here. Upper right, the Indians passed this way first. Lower left, or was

PART I

FOOTPRINTS TO HOOFPRINTS



it the dinosaurs? These tracks were made 200 million years ago in Warner Valley. Lower middle, fossils reflect a time when huge inland oceans covered this area. Lower right, Jed Smith may have been the first white man to see these writings now in the St. George city limits.

of physical and cultural change—left his footprints along game trails and in meadows where he gathered seeds, roots, and nuts to supplement his meat in a day-to-day subsistence.

We find his mummified remains, his clothing, his stone tools, spear throwers, flint dart heads, his rabbit nets of human hair, and his basketry of coiled split willow, in hundreds of dry caves and rock shelters in the Southwest. Archaeologists and anthropologists call these pre-A.D. 1 people Basketmakers—a part of the desert culture.

Less than 1,000 years ago, the descendant Anasazi of the St. George area were leaving their footprints, bow and arrows, and pottery (learned from more advanced Indians to the south) in primitive adobe and rock dwellings near small patches of corn, beans, and squash. Farming had come to the New World, to be followed by other food crops, cotton growing, and weaving.

We find their dwelling and granary ruins, their petroglyphs and pictographs—and those of their ancestors—by the thousands in the St. George area and throughout the Southwest.

This was a time of foot travel at a speed of rarely more than ten miles per day in desert and mountain country. Millions of footprints of man and mammal over thousands of years made the trails that were followed little more than 400 years ago by the white man in the Southwest, and a scant 200 years ago in the St. George area. Tracks from then on would be mingled with those of man, horse, oxen, cattle, and mule.

The Spanish invaders had moved north from MesoAmerica in 1540, bringing the Old World horse, swords and armor, early firearms, and Old World diseases unknown in this hemisphere. By 1598 some 400 colonists had claimed New Mexico in

TRACKS TO UTAH'S DIXIE



FOOTPRINTS

the name of the king. In 1604 Juan de Onate had traveled down the Colorado River to the Gulf of California, returned, and founded Santa Fe in 1605.

Small Spanish parties had been mining precious metals in the territory for more than 200 years before the Mexicans reclaimed the land. Old iron and brass tools, armor, neck yokes, and animal skin ore bags have been found in 17th Century shafts and tunnels from Spanish Fork, Eureka, and Potosi to the Lincoln Mine near Minersville, and others near Fillmore and Mountain Meadows.

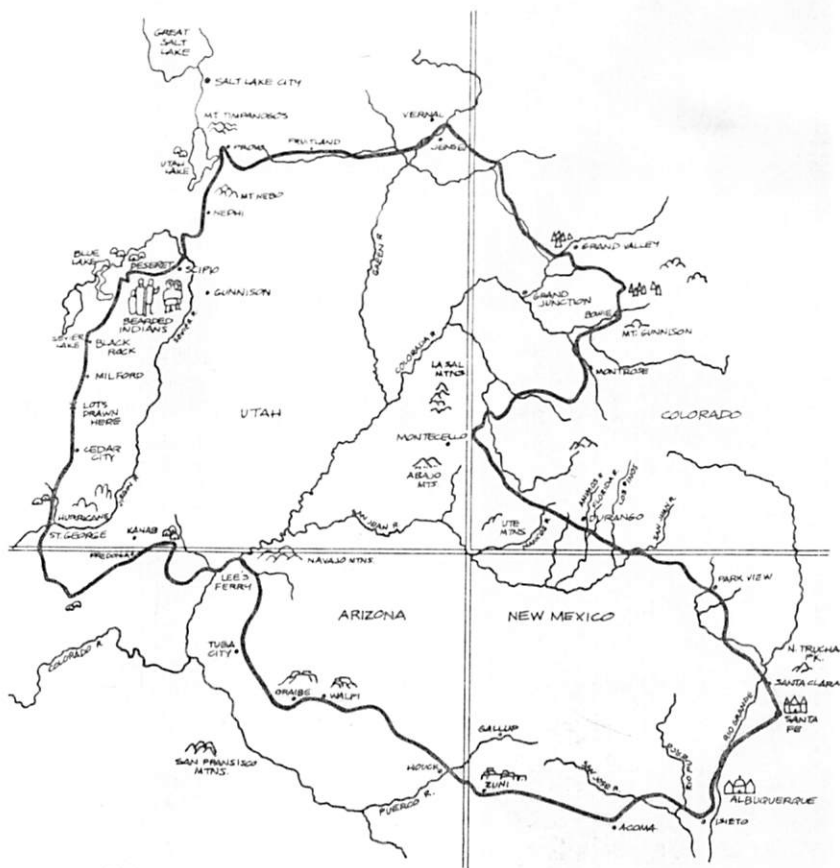
Lopez de Velasco, official geographer of New Spain, reported in 1514 that there were 200 Spanish towns and cities in North and South America, many mining camps, haciendas, and stock ranches with 32,000 families—a total population of 200,000 persons. He recorded that there were also 40,000 negro slaves and an estimated 5,000,000 Indians.

The Spanish government had established one route up the Rio Grande Valley and another up the Pacific Coast where they would eventually found 24 mission towns between 1769 and 1823. They were now anxious to establish a direct route from Santa Fe to the Presidio of Monterey.

It was a four-fold desire. The Catholic friars were anxious to establish missions and convert Indians to their "true faith." They wanted a trade route to the California missions, and they wanted to connect their two lines of exploration to "enclose" their territory from east to west. Lastly, they hoped to find gold for riches-poor Spain—and lots of it.

Juan Maria de Rivera made two trips, in 1765 and 1775, through western

Dominguez-Escalante Route, 1776



Just three weeks after the founding fathers of the U.S. inked their names to the Declaration of Independence, Atanasio Dominguez and Sylvestre de Escalante set out from Santa Fe on their famed expedition. They would become the first white men to pass through the area which became Washington County.

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Colorado to try to locate a trail around river and mountain obstacles.

The governor of New Mexico outfitted the first major expedition, Father Atanasio Dominguez supplied the horses and mules, and Father Sylvestre de Escalante kept the remarkable detailed diary for the ten-man group which left Santa Fe on July 29, 1776. It was just about three weeks after the founding fathers of these United States were penning their names to the Declaration of Independence, just 150 years after the first colonists had arrived on the east coast in 1620.

The major obstacle to the Spanish ambitions was the Colorado River, so the expedition traveled northward to seek a route around it. They meandered and seasawed over Rivera's and Indian trails with Indian guides through western Colorado, across the Green and Duschene Rivers, over the Wasatch Mountains to Utah Lake, and then northward to today's Spanish Fork (whose river they named Aguas Calientes), and on to near Provo.

Turning southward, they ran into snow and mud near today's Milford. Low on provisions, tired, and knowing they would find more foul weather to the west, they cast lots west of today's Cedar City to determine whether to continue toward their Pacific goal or return to Santa Fe.

They decided to go home. On this detour through equally unexplored desert and mountain country, they crossed over the southern boundary of the Great Basin near later Kanarrville and followed Ash Creek (which they called the Pilar River) past the later site of Toquerville to where Ash and La Verkin Creeks join the Virgin River.

Here it was recorded that Escalante named the Virgin the Sulphur River because of hot sulphur springs that flow into it near the Hurricane Fault. They were the first white men to enjoy today's Pah Tempe pools, although the Indians had used them for centuries.

The Escalante party came within 20 miles of the future St. George before completing their near-fatal ordeal and returning to Santa Fe in January of 1777. It had taken five months of almost continuous travel on horseback to cover 2,000 miles.

Other important explorations would

TRACKS TO UTAH'S DIXIE



be made below the Colorado River by Antonio de Espejo in 1582 and Juan de Onate in 1598. Francisco Garces in 1776 was the first white man to travel across the Colorado to the Mojave Villages and on to the Mission San Gabriel in California. But honors for finishing Escalante's task of blazing a trail above the Colorado to the west coast—a trail that would later serve both the Mormons and St. George—fell upon a trapper named Jedediah Strong Smith.

Smith was a member of a fur business which had been trapping throughout Montana, Wyoming, and Idaho in

mostly Oregon territory acquired from Spain in the 1803 Louisiana Purchase, and in northern Utah which was still Mexican Territory. Searching for beaver and otter, this clean-shaven, six-foot-two-inch, Bible-toting Methodist and fearless outdoorsman never thought of himself as an explorer. He drank liquor sparingly, rarely swore, never used tobacco, wrote beautifully in journals and letters, and was an excellent rifleman and horseman.

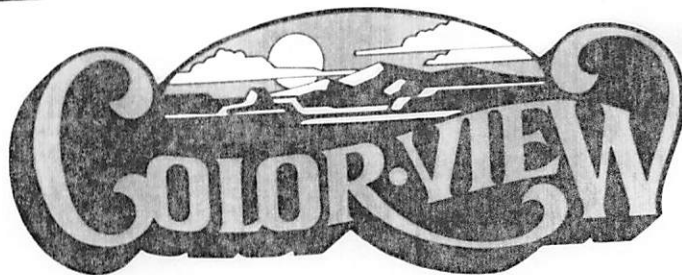
On August 22, 1826, Smith and a party of 16 men left the Cache Valley north of the Great Salt Lake. It was the

site of an annual trappers' rendezvous, a place to cache furs until buyers arrived (thus the name), and a starting point for hundreds of mountain men—trappers, prospectors, and adventurers.

Smith headed southward to the Sevier River, which he called Ashley's River for General William H. Ashley (a fur business outfitter at St. Louis). He rode and walked over the Clear Creek Divide past the later Cove Fort site to the Beaver River (which he named the Lost River), and on to the vicinity of today's Cedar City.

From there he followed Escalante's

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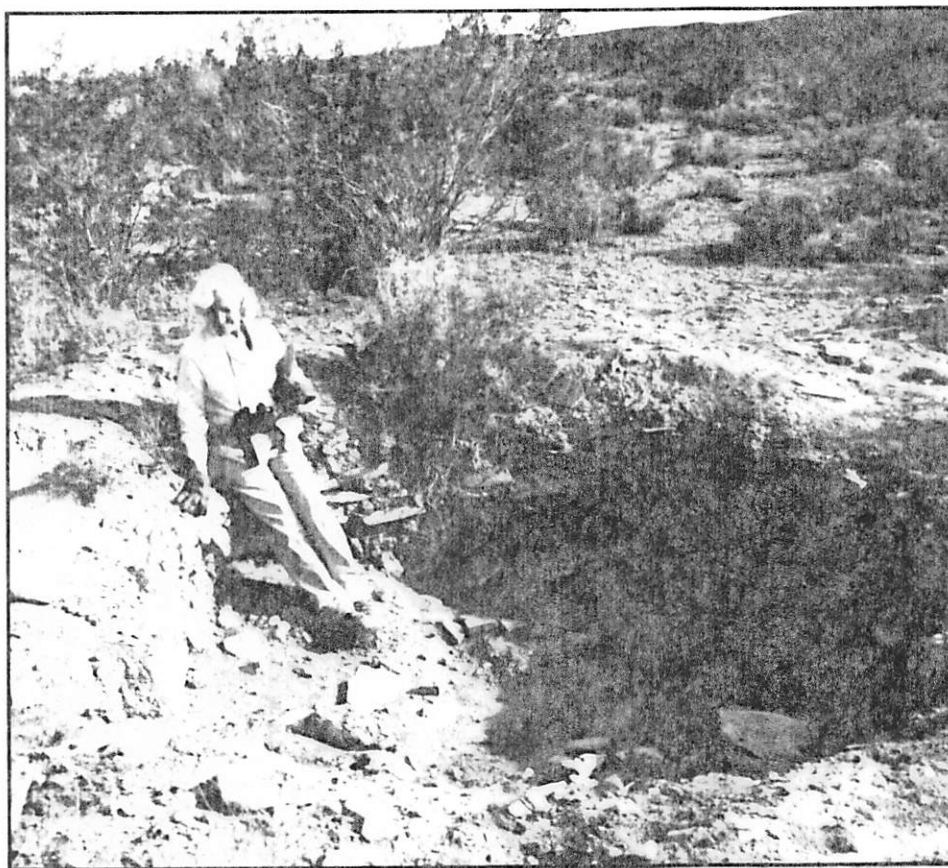
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Above, ancient Indian dwelling sites dot the landscape around St. George. Lower left, near the confluence of Ash Creek, La Verkin Creek, and the Virgin River. Lower right, the Escalante and Dominguez Trail is marked by monuments such as this near Cedar City.

FOOTPRINTS

trail down Ash Creek to the Virgin River, which he named the Adams River in compliment to President John Quincy Adams. This he followed from today's Toquerville through the future site of St. George all the way to the Colorado River (he called it the Seedskeeder River).

Thus he became the first white man to see the future heart of Dixie, and the first white man to travel the treacherous narrows of the Virgin River Gorge on foot and horseback.

Smith could not have known that surveyors, engineers, and heavy equipment operators with diamond drills, dynamite, and bulldozers would parallel his footprints with the building of Interstate 15 some 150 years later.

On that first trip, Smith left the Colorado River below later Las Vegas (The Meadows in Spanish), and headed southwest across the vast Mojave Desert, over Cajon pass, and through the San Bernardino Valley to the newly-established Spanish capitol of Monterey, near Los Angeles. He arrived there in November of 1826, nearly three months after the start of his journey at Great Salt Lake.

Then, to prove it was no accident, he did it again. From the Cache Valley rendezvous on July 13, 1827, Smith set out with 18 men on a slightly different course southeasterly through Utah Valley, and again down the Great Basin to Ash Creek and the Virgin River as far as the Santa Clara River. This he called Corn Creek (the Indians called it Tonaquint) because of the patches of corn, squash, and beans which the Pah-utches, as he called them, were growing there. He recorded that he traded some small trinkets for pumpkins with them.

TRACKS TO UTAH'S DIXIE



FOOTPRINTS

Smith did not want another slippery wading trip through the quicksands and red mud of the Virgin River Gorge so he followed the Santa Clara westward to the junction of today's old Highway 91 and the Gunlock Road at Shivwit's Corner. There, according to his journal, he turned southwest and crossed the mountain (Utah Hill) "without any difficulty," and crossing some low ridges (the Beaver Dam slope), struck a ravine (the Beaver Dam Wash, which he called Pah-utch Creek). This he followed to the Adams (Virgin) River, about ten miles below the mouth of the Gorge near later Littlefield. From there he picked up his earlier trail to the west coast.

So it was that Jedediah Smith's trail almost exactly paralleled the much later Highway 91 from Great Salt Lake to and through St. George, as well as paralleling the future interstate route through the Virgin River Gorge. And on part of that northerly trail, as well as the trail from Castle Rock southward around the Beaver Dam Mountains through the future Littlefield, Mesquite, Las Vegas, and San Bernardino, the westerly leg of the Old Spanish Trail to the coast was established with rarely a credit, and certainly no parks or monuments, to Smith's name in the state of Utah.

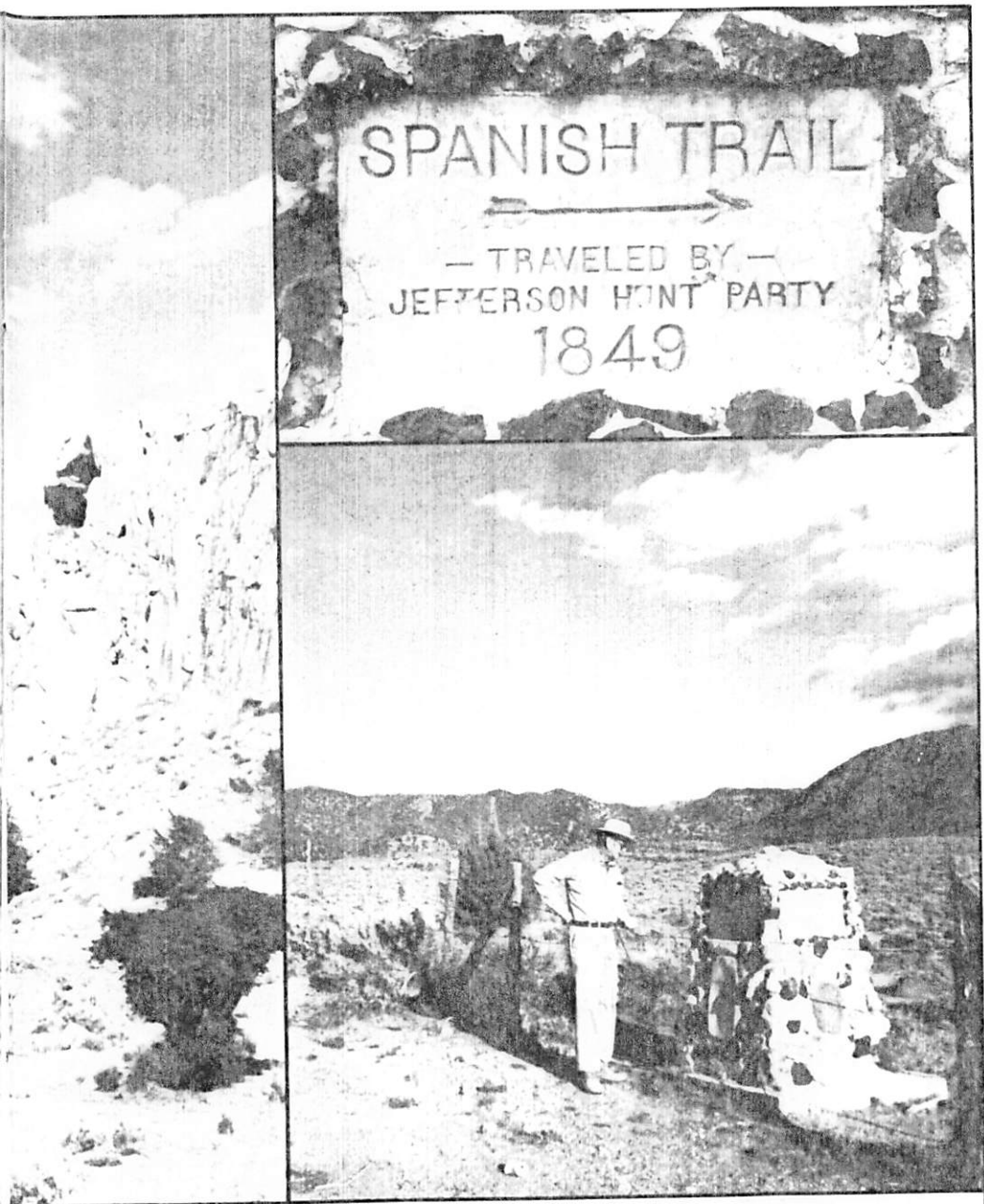
Moreover, Smith was in the first group of Americans that marked the east-west route through South Pass in 1824—the only break in the Rocky Mountains that could be traveled by later wagon trains. He was also the first man to walk the length of California to Oregon, and the first to cross the Sierra Nevada Mountains on a return to Great Salt Lake.

He probably first saw more of the



Left, Jedediah Smith was the first white man to leave his footprints at Castle Cliff after crossing the pass over Utah Hill in 1827. It would later become a way station on the

Jedediah Smith probably first saw more of the West and Southwest in his ten years of travel than any other white man.



Spanish Trail and a gas station on Highway 91. Upper and lower right, a marker west of Newcastle denoting the Spanish Trail.

west and southwest in his ten years of travels than any other white man. He survived three Indian massacres that took the lives of 40 men around him, and he wore his hair long to cover a lost eyebrow and mangled ear after a bear attack. Then he died a lonely death at the age of 32 on May 27, 1831, killed by the lances of a party of 20 Comanches while watering his horse away from his party in Kansas's Cimarron Desert.

Historians frequently note that these mountain men were the real pioneers of the West, the explorers who put the unknown on maps and into journals for the "pioneers" who followed—the wagon-borne Midwest sodbusters, the ranchers and cowboys, the Mormon colonizers, and the roadbuilders. They lived off a barren land on foot and horseback carrying a meager amount of provisions, meeting Indians who might be hostile or friendly on the Indian's turf, and did all the cut-and-try of impassable cliffs and rivers and box canyons.

Antonio Armijo is credited with having made the first trip over the Old Spanish Trail with a pack mule caravan. He left Abiquiu, New Mexico, (north of Santa Fe) in November of 1829, and arrived in Los Angeles 86 days later. Armijo followed Jed Smith's trail down Ash Creek to near later Hurricane, and then along the Virgin River through the Gorge to the Littlefield area, becoming leader of the third party of white men to see the future St. George.

Another trip in 1829 was made by Ewing Young of Tennessee who led a trading caravan over the same route as Armijo had followed, becoming yet another to see the vacant lots of a future St. George.

Just who deserves credit for the later Old Spanish Trail segment from west of Cedar City through Mountain Meadows to the Shivwits Corner we do not know.

TRACKS TO UTAH'S DIXIE



FOOTPRINTS

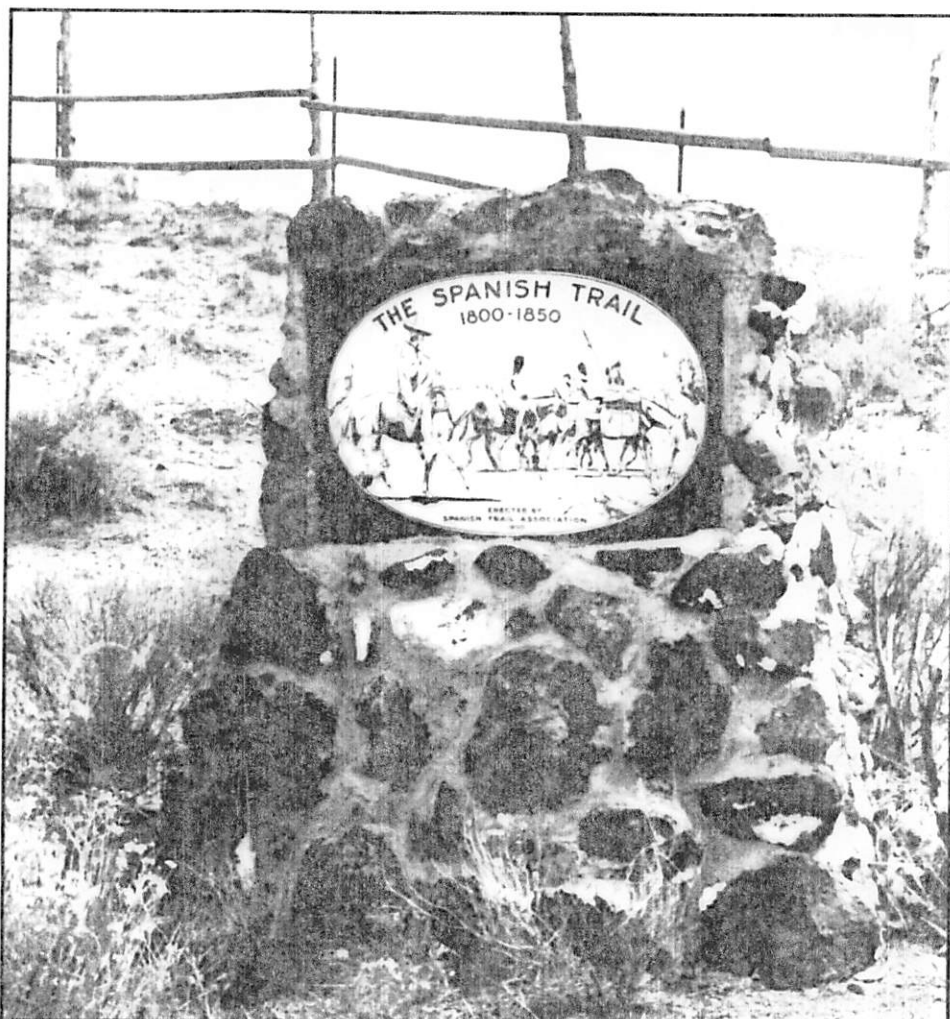
But in 1830 William Wolfskill led a group of fur traders from the East (rather than Santa Fe) to California, over that newer section of trail, and over Utah Hill in Smith's footsteps. And George C. Yount, who had been a member of Smith's 1827 party, led another party from Santa Fe in the fall of 1830 that followed parts of both Escalante's and Smith's trails.

The western edge of the future Dixie was a busy place. Countless other Spaniards followed, giving names to Rio Virgen (Virgin River), Las Vegas de Santa Clara (The Meadows of Santa Clara and later Mountain Meadows), and to the Rio de Los Angeles (the Muddy River). By the time Captain John C. Fremont of the U.S. Army came over the Old Spanish Trail in 1844, it was a well-marked route, but most-passable in other than winter months.

There are conflicting routes for the easterly leg of the trail on various old maps, mainly because there were minor divides and alternate short cuts dependent upon weather and water levels.

According to a map furnished by Fern Beacham Cox of Newcastle, it is generally agreed that the principal westerly trail looped through the Buckskin Valley from Circleville, over the 20-mile divide to just west of later Paragoonah (later Paragonah), south to Enoch, and just west of Cedar City. An alternate trail may have cut straight across the valley past Little Salt Lake and through the Parowan Gap before turning south to Enoch. A deeply-rutted trail there is thought to be a part of that route.

Indian "mound" sites at Paragoonah would be excavated in 1915 through



From Cedar City, the old Spanish Trail went through Iron Springs Pass, around the Antelope Mountain Range, through what is now Newcastle, and followed Pinto Creek to Pinto. It passed south of the future Hamblin Town, and went on to Mountain Meadows, Central, Veyo, Gunlock, Shivwits Corner, and over Utah Hill.

1917 and again in 1954 by the Smithsonian Institution and the University of Utah. The town was found to be built on the edge of an ancient Indian farming settlement. Almost 500 adobe-walled granaries and pit-house dwellings once covered the area that was occupied over a 200-year period, and

was probably abandoned when storehouses became empty during a prolonged drought between about 1720 and 1295 A.D.

From Cedar City the trail went through Iron Springs Pass, around the Antelope Mountain Range through later Newcastle, following Pinto Creek to

FOOTPRINTS

later Pinto. It passed south of the future Hamblin Town and on to Mountain Meadows, a favorite "recruiting" spot—a place to rest, water, and graze livestock while refreshing wagon train members.

One trail left the south end of Mountain Meadows and followed Mogotsu Creek; the other roughly followed today's Highway 18 through Central. Both trails joined at the Santa Clara River at later Gunlock, traveled south to Shivwits Corner and over Utah Hill.

From the top of the divide it followed the wash to Castle Rock, then across desert ridges and washes to Beaver Dam Wash in the Beaver Dam Well area, and on to west of today's town of Beaver where it climbed out of the wash.

It stayed west or south of the Virgin River through countless gullies and over desert hills through later Littlefield and Mesquite. From there it traveled south, crossing the Muddy River near old St. Thomas, then south to the springs at Las Vegas. Those 55-miles of waterless trail would be known as Journado del Muerto—Journey of Death—and would be littered with broken-down wagons

and the bleached bones of thirst-starved horses, mules, oxen, and cattle.

Through the Potosi Range and across the Mojave Desert it traveled from one life-sustaining spring to another, often at 30- to 40-mile intervals, to north of Baker to San Bernardino, over Cajon Pass, and on to the coast. The Mormons would later establish settlements in most of those town sites.

The Old Spanish Trail would eventually be about 1,200 miles in length, and it would require 60-some days to travel. Contrary to many opinions, it was strictly a horse or pack-mule route until the first two families took wagons over the trail from Taos, New Mexico, to Los Angeles in 1837.

A few words about the "slave trade" on the trail. From 1493 on, the Spanish in the West Indies were required by royal decree to follow a system called *encomienda* (protector). They were supposed to Christianize and civilize Indians there, but the decree permitted the exploitation of labor. When the Indian population gave out from overwork, the Spanish imported negro slaves to replace the dwindling Indian population—the start of black slavery in the Western Hemisphere.

Along the Old Spanish Trail and in the Southwest it was a different story. It

was the Utes and Shoshones who raided weaker tribes, captured Indian slaves, and sold or traded them to the Spanish for horses, knives, and blankets. If the Spanish did not buy, they were subject to theft and attack.

These captives usually went to New Mexico as house servants and herdsmen. They were well-treated, made part of the family, and given their freedom at the time of their marriage. It was a system not unlike that in eastern states where young white boys and girls were sometimes "bound" to farm families.

The Utes actually traveled to Santa Fe to barter their buckskin, dried meat, furs—and slaves—to the Spanish. When the Spaniards declined to buy the increasing number of slaves offered, the Utes made a particularly vicious attack on the Spanish. In retaliation, the Spaniards sold the Utes captured in that attack to the Mexicans. A southwestern slave traffic was born, to be continued for years by the Mexicans after the Spanish were thrown out.

When the first white colonizers arrived in what would become Utah, they were met with the same demands from the Utes—not the Spanish or the Mexicans—"Buy our slaves, sell us horses and cattle and gunpowder, or else!"

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